

Questions regarding the Food Stamp Programs

1. I have a question about Shared Living and food stamps. CMRO is interpreting that since an individual receiving Companion Model service is living in their own home and paying rent, then they also can apply for food stamps. An individual receiving Host Home service is also paying rent in a not-for-profit situation, so they should be able to apply for food stamps. Is this correct?

Response: Individuals receiving services under the Companion Model may apply for food stamps. FSD will evaluate each case individually to determine if the individual meets all the eligibility criteria to qualify for food stamps.

In general, individuals receiving services under the host home service would not be eligible for food stamps as the host home funding includes money for meals. However, for the individual to be eligible for Food Stamps, he or she would need to purchase and prepare and be responsible for his or her own meals and store food separately than the host family to be a separate household if the individual wanted to apply and be evaluated for Food Stamps. If the individual in the host home meets the latter description, she/he should apply for Food Stamps to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

2. Can children receiving ISL services or host home services be eligible to apply for food stamps?

Response: Children in the care and custody of Children's Division that are in child specific agreements or Interdivisional Agreements between CD and DD would not be eligible for food stamps, because Children's Division must cover the cost of their food. Food stamps would be considered duplication.

3. If the child is in placement and under the age of 18 and the parents are still guardians, would the parents be responsible for the child's needs and why would they need to apply for food stamps?

Response: Generally, children under the age of 18 would not be eligible for food stamps, but there could be exceptions. For example, a 17 year old that is independent and takes care of his/her individual needs may be eligible. (This would be someone who does not live with his or her parents)

4. If youth are between the ages of 18 and 21 and they are their own guardian, have a public administrator or guardian appointed by the court then should they apply for food stamps to see if they are eligible?

Response: Yes they may apply for food stamps.

5. Is it 'allowed' to use the FS benefits for the entire household if each member of the household qualifies for FS's?

Response: The individual may choose how to use their food stamp benefits in their household. Home and community-based waiver settings must allow individuals to have the freedom and support to control their own schedules and activities, and have access to food at any time and choose when and what to eat. (§441.301(c) (4))

6. If 2 out of 3 in an ISL qualify for FS's, is it expected that a provider would keep and prepare the food separately?

Response: The individual may choose how to use their food stamp benefits in their household. Home and community-based waiver settings must allow individuals to have the freedom and support to control their own schedules and activities, and have access to food at any time and choose when and what to eat. (§441.301(c) (4))

7. How does it work when the amount of FS's varies for each person in the ISL? Food allowance may vary from person to person even if they are not accessing FS and only accessing their benefits. If one individual has more funding than the roommates, the amount above the other roommates should be utilized for specific needs of the individual – not group share.

Response: The individual may choose how to use their food stamp benefits in their household. Home and community-based waiver settings must allow individuals to have the freedom and support to control their own schedules and activities, and have access to food at any time and choose when and what to eat. (§441.301(c) (4))

Same questions but applied to group homes, would the answers be any different?

Response: Individuals receiving Group Home services from a not for profit provider can apply for food stamps and FSD will evaluate each case individually to determine if the individual meets all the eligibility criteria to qualify for food stamps. Group Homes are group living arrangements and the following are the different methods of preparing and serving meals in the group living arrangement.

- **Meals may be prepared and served at a common eating area for residents. The group living arrangement uses Food Stamp benefits to purchase food for communal meals.**
- **Meals may be prepared centrally and distributed to residents individually. The home must ensure each resident's Food Stamp benefits are used for his/her meals.**
- **Residents keeping the Food Stamp benefits for their own use may use the benefits to buy prepared meals from the group living arrangement or purchase their own food.**

8. Is the housemates' information to be listed on the food stamp application? There is a box that needs to be checked on the application stating if the individuals eat together or not. The thing is, in many cases they do eat together, which may mean total income/resources will have to be included when the application is processed. However, checking "no" changes the way the food has to be prepared in the home because they could no longer share their food.

Response: The question should be answered as asked on the application: List all the people who live in your household. You must include any children under the age of 22, spouses, and anyone who eats with you by checking "yes" in the last column labeled "buy/cook together."

Also, if they do put housemates' information on there, is it a HIPPA violation to put SS # and birthday of two housemates on the application for the third housemate?

Response: The application states that providing the SSN (Social Security Number) and immigration status of each household member is voluntary.

9. What if guardian does not want to apply for food stamps?

Response: The guardian does not have to apply for food stamps.

10. The memo states the individual can sign the authorized representative form but does the guardian actually have to do this because the individual has a legal guardian?

Response: No, the individual does not have to sign the authorized representative form if they have a legal guardian.

11. For phone interviews, what do they do with non-verbal individuals—can FSD do that interview with the authorized representative?

Response: Yes, this is addressed in the Division of DD provider memo regarding food stamps dated February 2, 2015. Additional policy information can be found on the FSD site under the Food Stamp Manual at the following website:

<http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp/>

12. Is it a requirement that an individual in placement apply for food stamps (for those residing with agencies that meet requirements to be eligible for food stamps)?

Response: No, the individual is not required to apply for food stamps.

13. However, the memo does mention that residents of not-for-profit group homes are also eligible. Does the Division expect all n-f-p group home providers to obtain food stamps on their

residents' behalf? And, are there rules governing this, and how the food stamps are used, tracked, etc.?

Response: No, the Division does not expect providers to obtain food stamps on behalf of residents. Food stamp rules can be found at the following website:

<http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp/>